



## CONNECTICUT ATHLETIC TRAINERS' ASSOCIATION

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Testimony of Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association (CATA): Eleni Diakogeorgiou, MBA, ATC

RE: Raised SB 229: AAC Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention

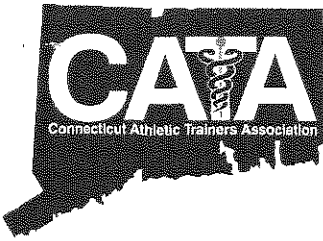
February 27, 2014

Good afternoon, Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and members of the Committee on Children. Connecticut Athletic Trainers' Association (CATA) is strongly supportive of the concept of increasing awareness of sudden cardiac arrest (SCA), including promoting training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and automated external defibrillator (AED) use. We partnered with the American Heart Association in Connecticut in 2009 to help pass the law requiring AEDs in schools (Public Act 09-94). Youth sports safety is a primary goal of our association and its members.

Within the past several years, at least two high school athletes have survived SCA because the athletic trainer at their respective schools was on site and able to deploy the AED rapidly. We are fortunate in Connecticut that the state licensing requirement for coaches requires them to have current certification in CPR, which includes using AEDs. Recognition and response to SCA is part of that training. Current interscholastic requirements for pre-participation sports physical exams include the appropriate medical history questions that help identify individuals with cardiac issues that might put them at risk for SCA.

Sudden cardiac arrest can affect healthy individuals of all ages. SCA can strike anyone, at any time, without warning. It is responsible for over 325,000 deaths per year in the United States, and is the leading cause of death in athletes. SCA is not the same as a heart attack. A heart attack is caused by a blockage in an artery supplying blood to the heart. SCA is occurs as a result of a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing it to suddenly stop beating. The result is called ventricular fibrillation (VF), and the only treatment for VF is defibrillation. Less than 12% of SCA victims survive. Immediate access to an AED is critical, since a shock from the AED within 3 to 5 minutes is optimal. For every minute defibrillation is delayed, survival rates decrease by 10%. The availability of an AED and trained responders is a crucial component in the chain of survival from sudden cardiac arrest.

We are supportive of the concept raised in the bill, and are working with the American Heart Association on suggested changes to clarify language. We would be happy to meet with the committee to help move a modified bill forward.



February 27, 2014

The CATA supports increasing awareness of sudden cardiac arrest, including promoting public access automated external defibrillators (AEDs) and CPR training for high school students, school employees, and members of the public.

Suggested changes to SB 229: An Act Concerning Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention

- 1) Lines 17-24: Suggest changes starting line 20 to (C) and (D) to clarify the appropriate means of medical treatment is to immediately activate the emergency medical system, and that any decision regarding return to sports should be made by the treating cardiologist.
- 2) Lines 25-30: CPR training is the most appropriate "sudden cardiac arrest awareness education program." We fully support CPR training for students in high school (or younger).
- 3) Lines 31-51: This type of informed consent should already be in place. The document is also called an "assumption of risk" statement or "waiver." It informs parents of the risks associated with participating in sports, up to and including death. This has been a legal standard in athletics since the 1980's.
- 4) Lines 52-77: CPR training (with AED) is already required by state law in order to obtain and maintain a coaching certificate for interscholastic athletics. Compliance is done with oversight of the Connecticut Coaching Education Program and State Department of Education.
- 5) Lines 82-89: see #1 above (same language)
- 6) Lines 95-103: Maintenance of CPR certification is already required by law. This constitutes a "refresher" course.
- 7) Lines 104-111: Sudden cardiac arrest is characterized by sudden collapse, without preceding symptoms. Management consists of activating EMS (911), CPR & AED, and transport to a hospital. Parents or guardians should be notified immediately.
- 8) Lines 123-128: The only person that should clear a student-athlete to return to activity after SCA is a physician, preferably a cardiologist.